

# Preparing children spiritually for school

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

Spiritual growth for our children is as important as providing nutritious meals. Proper nutrition is vital to the physical development of children. Spiritual nutrition is essential to their spiritual development.

Would a good parent regularly send their child to school without breakfast or to bed without dinner? Of course not. But with today's busy schedules, we might be sending our children into the world without preparing them spiritually. Children who are nourished daily with moral and spiritual thoughts from the Bible are better prepared to meet challenges successfully.

Several families I know have made Bible study an integral part of their daily family routine. The techniques vary but the results are similar.

One family with three children ranging from elementary to teenage reads a Bible lesson each morning during breakfast. In another family, the mother gives her children Bible verses to take with them to school to help them with their studies and after-school activities. Another family uses "grace" at dinner-time to memorize Bible verses. They continue using one verse until the whole family knows it. This is one way to memorize the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Another family encourages their children to study a Bible lesson along with the rest of their homework.

All these families attend church regularly. But just as they don't eat dinner only once a week on Sunday and expect to make it through the week, so these families see the need for daily spiritual inspiration.

To feed children spiritually, we need to be familiar with Bible passages ourselves. Psalms, Proverbs and the New Testament are good places to start.

The results of proper spiritual nutrition are remarkable. Grades have improved; fear of failure overcome; good friends found at a new school. Temptations withstood. Shyness lessened. Those children who are given

practical spiritual ideas are better prepared to use them in solving school problems.

One 4th grader told me about getting her school pictures. She thought she looked ugly and became depressed. Suddenly she remembered a verse from the Bible (Genesis 1:27) that says God made man in His image and likeness. She reasoned that the image and likeness of God had to be pretty. That's the way God saw her. So that's the way she could see herself. She decided she needed to see herself the way God made her.

Then she began thinking of good qualities from God that she expressed and began listing them to herself. Qualities like intelligence, happiness, being nice to her sisters, etc. She thought about the Godlike qualities that her friends expressed. She told me that she stopped thinking about how her hair looked and the other things she didn't like about the picture, and realized what made someone really pretty was their good qualities. She said lots of her friends didn't like their pictures either. She was able to talk to them about looking at their real beauty, their good qualities. She said she felt better and so did they.

As we prepare our children for the new school year, let's consider how to improve their spiritual readiness. Our spiritual breakfast may begin with Philippians 2:5 "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"; Matthew 19:26 "with God all things are possible"; and Romans 8:28 "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Your children will remember your loving preparation of this spiritual nutrition long after they leave the breakfast table.

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